









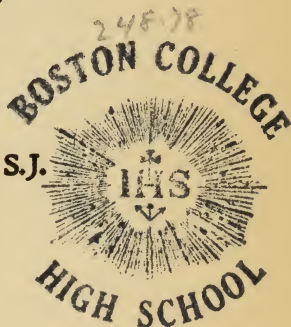
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# LIGHT FOR NEW TIMES

A BOOK FOR CATHOLIC GIRLS

By  
MARGARET FLETCHER  
OXFORD, ENGLAND

With a Preface by  
W. D. STRAPPINI, S.J.



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## PREFACE



THE nineteenth century, era of change and of unexpected developments as it was, has brought about no change greater than the present altered position of English women. That certain fixed peculiarities must differentiate the sexes will always be true, and these must largely shape their respective pathways in life. Actual experience in our own days, however, has made us readjust many of the traditional ideas as to the essential physical weakness and mental inferiority of women. The mental capacity of girls has been proved to be no less susceptible of educational elevation than that of boys; while the increased stature so noticeable in the women of the present generation speaks for itself as to their physical development.

Together with the discovery, as we may almost call it, of the intellectual and administrative possibilities latent in women—latent through want of training and opportunity—there has come the necessity for many of them to enter more largely into the active life of the nation. Boards of guardians,

school boards, inspectorships, and many other positions which affect the welfare of the community, no less than the successful management of important industrial enterprises, have all shown what abilities women possess and their power of using their abilities.

In the course of the last century a new order of things was looming on the horizon, and we are now face to face with some of those new developments. Under modern conditions—conditions which have not halted, but are still on the march—the numbers of women as compared with men introduces a new problem, and requires a new solution for many problems that are old. Only a proportion of women will enter upon what has hitherto been deemed the natural, almost exclusive, career of womankind—matrimony—from sheer lack of partners. Many women, in increasing numbers, must perforce be their own breadwinners.

Our generation, like its predecessors, inherited the tradition that woman was emphatically a being to be taken care of; one not to be trusted, but hedged in by material safeguards and social regulations, unwritten, but rigid as granite. Safeguards there must be, and social boundaries, but the nature of these safeguards requires adjustment from changing circumstances, and boundaries may have to be moved further on, without, how-



ever, ceasing to be boundaries. The new century opens with a new idea that woman is a being who must *also* be taught to take care of herself, to depend on herself, and even at times to take a share in carrying burdens hitherto exclusively reserved for the shoulders of men.

These are some of the new materials which have to be woven into the fabric of life. It is for us so to arrange things that these new requirements may be fulfilled without any sacrifice of those qualities of heart and mind which form the charm, the refining influence, the moral elevation of womankind. The charm, the refining influence, the moral elevation of woman, is not for herself alone; she is the guardian of these qualities, which flourish not exclusively, but most richly, in her nature. To a large extent she holds them in trust for the human race, and how very much depends upon the manner in which she fulfils that trust, or shall we say, is *taught* to fulfil it!

When Eve was given to Adam she was given as a help, but also as an equal. The Catholic Church has always recognized this equality of the sexes; and, as in the case of St. Hilda of Whitby, has not hesitated to commit the care of a monastery of men to an abbess. The misnamed Reformation lowered the position of woman, and this lowering of her position is incidentally brought out by

the words interpolated into the marriage service by the Anglican Church, when the wife is made to acknowledge her inferiority when she promises to *obey* her husband. This promise has no place in Catholic tradition. Catholic marriage is a contract between equals. The Catholic formula is identically the same for both man and wife; the same laws and the same duties are incumbent upon both. It was the new religion of the sixteenth century which debased the status of woman, and invented excuses to emancipate man from the observance of commandments which bind in exactly the same way both man and woman. Eve was the equal, as well as the helpmate, of Adam. She failed in her trust; she did not help, and she had to bear the punishment of her unfaithfulness. Her daughters have shared her punishment, and have borne the burden of her sin both as individuals and as a body. In the treatment meted out to woman in pre-Christian times and in non-Christian nations we see how she paid the penalty for having lowered, and not raised, the moral standard of mankind.

But another Eve came, and with the coming of Mary Immaculate the social redemption of woman was begun: it would now be possible for woman to regain her legitimate influence. Yet not at once. For woman's influence, being gentle and persuasive, reaching the head through the heart, could not

flourish in the wild storm of passions let loose by the breaking up of the Roman Empire. Centuries must come and go; the rooted prejudices engendered by the persistence of one type of ideals must fade away, through the old order itself changing and insensibly giving place to the new. The upheavals of social and religious origin must be calmed down, sufficiently, if not entirely; then, when the storm has swept away into the distance and left peace, even with wreckage, in its track, then with returning calm the gentler forces of nature could work.

It is a coincidence—it may be more—that the various currents of opinion which were working in many quarters for what we may conveniently, if not quite accurately, term the emancipation of women, came into prominence about the time of the declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. It was a happy coincidence, and, let us also say, a good augury. A new era for women was beginning, and what model could be more appropriate than Mary? In every change there is contained more or less of a reaction; the reaction comes about by the awakening of forces hitherto inoperative, and in the new-born vigor of new forces there is apt to be too much of a reaction. When justly condemning the “too much,” many fail to distinguish, and condemn the reaction itself, with apparent reason. With all new

manifestations, time and developments are needed before we can pass a fair and equitable verdict. So we must not be surprised if the flood of new ideas involved in the emancipation of woman flowed too far at first. That was only to be expected. Yet not all the flood will flow back into the original channel; many of its waters have come to stay. What are we going to do with them? We cannot dry up these waters, even if we would; but why dry them up? They are fertilizing waters, if we know how to conduct them to arid places; if we leave them alone they may form unhealthy pools, unsightly, and sources of danger. But let me drop metaphor. We all realize that changed conditions of life necessitate changed conditions of education. It is no disparagement of the older methods to say that they will not fit our new developments. They were never meant to cope with issues to them unknown. They were wisely framed to meet the requirements of their day—we must as wisely legislate for the requirements of our own. The essays in this little book are a contribution—one of many, I hope—to meet some actual requirements of our passing day; to enable girls who leave our schools with light hearts, and some with heads as light, to enter upon the life which succeeds school days with some practical warning as to what the realities of life will be. Knowledge, we are truly told, is power;

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and the career of many girls has suffered an early shipwreck for want of that power which comes from knowledge. Not all can be helped, indeed, not all will let themselves be helped; that does not absolve us from at least making some attempts. There is a gap in our Catholic literature for girls which needs filling up, and all earnest and practical and intelligent efforts to fill this gap should receive the welcome they deserve.

W. D. STRAPPINI, S.J.

*Oxford*, 1903.



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# LIGHT FOR NEW TIMES



## I

**“Without the Way there is no going”\***

THESE pages are written for any girl who will read them, but with the particular hope that they may most often fall into the hands of those in whom the joy of life runs strongly and who dream of living strenuously in one way or another.

Experience of life has convinced me, on the one hand, how appreciative mankind can be when woman approaches at all near to any ideals that have been formed for her, and if possessed of any supernatural or spiritual beauty, how touchingly ready to reverence her and even to be led by her; and, on the other hand, how disastrous the influence of the merely natural woman usually is, how within the circle of her influence all ideals wither, and while the natural in man leads

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\* Æ Kempis.

him to seek and follow her to his deterioration and ruin, he knows her at last for the enemy of his soul.

I have observed, besides, a large company of women, without much influence as individuals either for good or evil, victims of a false education, who drift aimlessly along at the mercy of any stray current of thought, without any definite understanding of their own nature or any clear idea of the real meaning of life. Although their personal significance is small, they enervate the society to which they belong by the aimlessness and uselessness of their lives.

It was never according to the purpose of Almighty God that woman should be the enemy of man and an instrument of his degradation; neither was it part of His design that she should be foolish and weak and a constant source of anxiety to those about her. A helpmeet for man he created her and a comrade for the journey of life, in every relationship, in every capacity, and her interests are his and his are hers, and no power on earth can separate the interdependence of one upon the other. If in any society or body of people one generation of women is permitted to grow up unfitted to share its responsibilities and labors, the whole society suffers.

Now Catholic women have behind them a great record of heroism, of endurance, and of suffering bravely borne for the Faith; they

have been the true comrades of the men of their time. Those who were cradled under the penal laws and served Almighty God valiantly, have made it possible for you, alone among the girls of England, to be brought up in the only Faith that explains life truly and gives strength to live it rightly. These are days of peace, and days of peace have their own dangers. In times of persecution lights and shadows stand out strongly and duties are obvious, but in times of peace it is easy to let the duty slip by unrecognized and to fail to see things clearly in the new and softer light.

You, for whom the silver cord which binds you to school life will soon be loosed, have to look to it that you are in no way unworthy of the women of the past. You have to find the key-note of your own generation, you have to learn how to be helpmeets to man under new conditions, and it is to help you to this end that what follows is written.

If you saw a girl, whom you knew to have been started upon a journey to a particular place, jump into the first train she saw without inquiring where it went to, merely because she thought it fun to be moving along at a great rate, and that it did not much matter in what direction, you would think her a very silly creature. This is exactly what some girls do when they leave school and start upon the journey of life.

Is it prudent to tumble out of school life upon so momentous a journey without learning as much as you can about the different roads that run across the world that stretches before you? And what a contradictory world it is! Ask one who has traveled half way along the road and he will tell you it is full of beauty and mystery and unsolved problems. Another will tell you it is filled with stern duties and relentless laws; another, that it is full of the glamor of strange attractions and resonant with the clamor of human passions and the ceaseless sound, now discordant, now harmonious, of the interaction of one personality upon another. One will tell you that it is as a loom in whose warp and woof good and evil are inextricable till the Judgment Day; another, that in the same circumstances one man grows great and his brother abject; and, greatest paradox of all, while one tells you that it is a world full of incident and ceaseless happenings, another tells you that it is a world of endless monotony, empty of interest, full of shallow business, in which loving and hating are done in an equally tepid manner.

No one will be found to tell you that it is a big playground.

All who are Catholics will have but one story to tell as to how they found the right road and kept their hearts warm as they went along. They will tell you of a figure on

whom their eyes were always fixed, seen through the glamor and above the strife, and, very clearly against the wide sky that over-arches life's monotony, a figure stretched upon the Cross.

Clearly the start into such a world as this will take some thinking over. It would be wise, too, to see what kind of an outfit you have got together for this journey; if you have had your wits about you during the past few years, it should not be inconsiderable.

The years that lie behind you have probably been happy ones. The Convent School is a small world in itself, peopled by those of one Faith only, full of order and beauty of work and of play, and in it you have been as sheltered and as carefully tended as if you had been a flower growing in a high-walled garden. You were sheltered like a flower that you might develop strong, healthy roots, which no hand should disturb too soon, and which should be vigorous enough to bear transplanting into any kind of soil.

In plain language, the main business during the time of education has been to lay the foundation of your Faith deep down, and this should have included in the doing the developing of all the powers of mind, intellect and heart. This laying of a strong foundation should have set its stamp upon your character and given it stability and an underlying strength of purpose. You who have grown

up under the very shadow of the mantle of Our Lady, in whose character there is no trace of feebleness or foolishness, should be strong and ready to raise a standard which other women, less well taught than you, could see and follow. But, alas! it is often and often remarked that Catholic girls are less serious than their neighbors, and that the appearance of womanhood too often conceals the mind and sense of responsibility of a child.

How comes it that you, who have learned such profound truths, who have been in daily contact with lives of discipline and self-sacrifice, should set about the business of life in a more frivolous spirit than girls who have not had your advantages?

You have got it into your heads, perhaps, that the world beyond the Convent walls is a place of pleasure. A comical notion this, to those who happen to know something of life. Some of you perhaps reason like this: "The deeper-minded girls will have vocations and become nuns, but my vocation is the world. The world is a place of pleasure and fun. Almighty God won't expect me to aim at a higher standard than will carry me safely along this rather easy road."

The real world has been hidden from you; kindly hands have drawn a veil across it, which has been raised only here and there to show you pleasant places. Why? Not be-



cause it was so attractive that had you seen all, school life would have seemed a prison house by contrast, but because it happened to contain such ugly things, such bitter struggles, such real temptations, such deep sufferings, that it was not good you should know of these things until you were possessed of a certain strength and until you had learned something of the joy of life.

Let us examine a little closely life as it is lived around us to-day, and try to get such true pictures as will be helpful to you just now. Not the whole picture—the time has not come for that yet—but each part must be faithful as far as it goes. Is the prospect a trifle alarming? A high degree of happiness and much merriment are to be met with in the world if you know the conditions for gaining them, but to grasp at any counterfeit of the real things will surely bring you acquaintance with sorrow. When it is a question of gaining knowledge that shall affect practical conduct, it is well to test the wisdom of books by observations of actual life.

Books of counsel for behavior in the world are apt to be misleading a few years after they are written, and interesting as history of past manners rather than fingerposts to direct us on the paths that lie before us. Books of devotion that you may have read, and which have enshrined eternal truths, may nevertheless have puzzled and discouraged

you by their hints for the conduct of life, because they were written for another age and another civilization.

All you who feel that your vocation is in the world have probably also a feeling at the back of your minds, and if you don't yet recognize its presence you inevitably will some day, that the best state for you is the married state; that in no other state will you find a field for the mysterious powers within you, of which you are beginning to be dimly conscious, that the sacrament of marriage will furnish the key that will unlock the depths of your nature. Some of you will not have got as far in thought as this, but you will at any rate think it the natural thing that some kind of suitor for your hand should appear upon the horizon some day; and so completely would this even seem to answer to your needs, and to be proper to the spring time of life, that your sense of justice will be hurt if such a person fails to appear; more particularly since everyone will tell you that the married state is the highest, the happiest, and the safest for a woman, always excepting the religious.

Let us glance at actual life. It is a matter of fact that very many women who are attractive, good, capable, sometimes beautiful, never receive an offer of marriage at all; what a different state of things this is to what novels, story books, or the conversation



of our friends would lead us to suppose! what a shock to our sense of romance and of the fitness of things! It is only of late years that the truth has been frankly acknowledged; formerly a conventional politeness thought it decent to cover it by the gallant fiction that every single woman remained so by choice. A fiction kindly conceived, but its existence implies a disgrace to conceal, and this must have made it difficult for an unmarried woman to feel any dignity in her lot.

There is no one to blame for this state of affairs. Girls are capable enough of affection and devotion, and if they are far from perfect, they are at any rate in no way below the men of their class. The sober truth we have to face is that, even if some fairy wand could bring all the right people together and endow them with adequate incomes, there would still be many forlorn ladies called to no trysting place, for there would not be enough husbands for all.

Many causes contribute to bring about this unevenness of numbers, of which wars, dangerous professions, and the size of the empire, whose distant outposts have to be manned, are among the most obvious. And in truth marrying is no such simple matter, and the more complex the state of society the less simple it becomes. Love should come first, and many years may pass before either the man or the woman meets the person who

can arouse this feeling. Some go through life without ever meeting such a one, or if they do there may be an insuperable obstacle in the way of marriage. Then there is a phenomenon, which every one will have some opportunity of observing, and which will remain forever something of an enigma. One girl who apparently is in no way above the average in mind or heart, possibly not in good looks, will attract the admiration of many men and have a little court around her; some man who fails to win her may remain single for her sake. Another girl who seems to have as many gifts remains unnoticed. The want of balance in the numbers of men and women who reach maturity is far from being the only cause that determines single lives.

All through the ages there have been many women whose lot appears to have been to look on at the heart of life. We may not have heard very much of them; their fate has not furnished material for the writers of romance, and at a first glance they would not appear to have left their mark upon history.

What is the meaning of it all? Has Almighty God forgotten to provide for them? Does He create immortal souls, endow them with great powers, and then give them no opportunities for using them? It would almost seem as if some pious writers have thought so, so persistently do they address women as wife, as mother, as religious, and ignore

those other no less real and often far harder vocations.

At all times lives of hidden sacrifice and work have been lived in the world, which, though they have seemed to pass unrecognized, were of vital service to the family or the nation, and whose perfume, though a little too delicate and thin for the common liking, went up as acceptable incense to Almighty God. But there were failures, too; those who, fearing that in missing the best they had missed all, lost heart and their hold on life, and pined away from lack of interest and a sufficient motive for living, leaving undone the work they failed to recognize.

There would seem to be a shade of sadness over the best of such single lives, until we reflect that no one makes the journey alone. Almighty God has each one by the hand, and to some He whispers secrets which only those can know who are not led along the road of common happiness. If there are dark things in the world there are many fair things, too. God is revealed in a thousand ways, in all the beauty, the intelligence, the order, the harmony, and the kindness we meet with. He has need of many lives, through whose medium He can manifest some of His beauty in ugly places, of His order in chaos, of His light in darkness. He has need of those in the world, who, just in the dull places He has appointed them, will permit Him to unseal

their eyes and open their ears to feel His presence in common things.

And for this manifold revelation He has need of every soul He has created. We cannot suppose Almighty God to be unaware that He creates many women whom He neither destines for married life nor for any great achievement. He who is infinite justice does not reward one vocation in a less degree than another, and whatever your portion, it has been allotted to you for your ultimate good. He will work His will upon each one, to reach the heart and shape the character. One He will soften with human love, another He will strengthen by loneliness, another He will hew into shape by hard blows of pain or dishonor or despair.

The only possible failure is in rebellion and resistance. You cannot foresee your share of life, and you certainly cannot choose it, except in the limited sense in which you can choose to exert yourself and make the utmost of your opportunities, or to sit idle. If marriage should be your lot, will you be less fit for your vocation because you have been capable, helpful, awake to the needs of others and the many-sidedness of life in the years that went before? And if marriage should not come, and you have drifted on aimlessly, frivolously, and filled with thoughts of self-indulgence and amusements, you will awaken to a sense of the emptiness and uselessness of

your life at an age when it is not easy to fill it; you will try to take up some work which your previous life has not fitted you to do well, and you will swell the lists of the fussy, the incompetent, the would-be helpers of the world. Or a worse fate still may await you. You may find yourself among those shipwrecked, lonely souls—and everyone who has reached middle age knows some such—who were as well born as you, as well started in life, and as gay at the outset, and who lived to fill the void in their lives with sensual pleasure, and ended in drink and dishonor.

It is an eternal law that those who will not work shall not live, shall at any rate gradually deteriorate until they cease to live in any high sense of the term. There are multitudinous ways of working; an attempt to improve and widen the mind or to acquire the art of social intercourse is real work if it involves effort of one kind or another. But effort there must be, and some sort of struggle of your higher faculties towards development, if there is to be a wholesome life.

It is highly important that the work should be rightly directed and itself in harmony with your nature as a woman. And now I come to the heart of the whole matter. The life's history of every woman, from the stupidest to the most brilliantly intellectual, from the most shrewish nature to the sweetest, turns upon the use of the affections.

The explanation to the curiously diverse characters we meet can be found in affections undisciplined and run riot, affections thwarted and starved, affections turned back upon self, or affections wholly given back to God the Giver. It is difficult at first sight to believe that all the hard, peevish, worldly and selfish women we meet have become so by misuse of the power they seem most to lack; but it is true. Now, whatever profession, or work, or sphere of usefulness is entered upon, the affections must not only be disciplined, they must be provided for. Every Catholic girl knows that she owes the fundamental affections of her heart to God, but in the world she owes, too, affection to a great many who need it, and the right giving of this is the expression of her love for God. It has been somewhat the modern fashion, while championing what has been called the intellectual emancipation of woman, to forget her more essential needs.

If any of you are to go out into the world and either earn your own living or enter one of the many careers now open to women, you will see a good deal of the results of this mistake.

A clever girl often starts life in an independent spirit, and feeling the world to be so full of abstract interests and serious pleasures, she imagines that she can ignore the life of the affections, and as she supposes,



“live like a man.” The crucial day when her emotional life will assert itself may be deferred, but it will come as inevitably as death, and if it has been neglected there will be a disaster of one kind or another.

We Catholics at any rate are not likely to fall into this mistake and to undervalue the real womanly qualities.

Our danger is rather in restricting the fields of their exercise, and supposing that they are limited to a very few and obvious ones. We are to discuss in the following papers where these fields lie, and how in each one a girl may find an outlet for her womanly nature, and put into the work she lays her hand to that atmosphere of well-ordered affection which is necessary to the world as a complement to the more masculine virtues. The first business then for you in starting on your journey is to consider on what road you can develop your nature as Almighty God intended, how most usefully to others, most happily for yourself.

But how about this outfit you are to take with you?

It should be the same for all—*Self-control*.

If it is true that the most important problem a woman has to face is the government of her *emotional life*, then for all, no matter of what rank or state in life, the power of self-control is absolutely necessary. The end of school life ought to see you all with at any

rate a modest outfit, if only you will recognize its value and not throw it away in the first year of liberty. Affections, and the emotional life, may be the largest gift you have received, but the gift is not to rule you; you must hold the reins and be in command always.

Emotions that have got out of hand are a terribly destructive force. Uncontrolled and undirected force may cause disturbance and disaster—it can never influence. When in a tragic scene, a great actress appears to be swept away by the tide of her grief, and then to compel the tears of her audience, she has in reality perfect control over the grief she is interpreting, and knows quite well that if she lost it for a moment, and were at the mercy of her feelings, she would lose the sympathy of her audience at the same moment, who would remain unmoved and dry-eyed. But you Catholic girls, who, in your convent schools, have grown up under the very shadow of our Lady, should need no illustrations to persuade you that there is nothing feeble in the highest type of womanhood. Nothing morally weak, and no moments when the spirit abdicates its supremacy, and leaves the body to dictate the thought or the deed.

Have you ever felt that the small rules which you have been obliged to observe, were just a teasing part of the machinery of school



life, from which you would soon be freed? If so, you have altogether failed to understand them rightly.

They bear the same relation to your future life as learning the goose step does to that of a soldier. The recruit may think the exercises very meaningless, and fancy he would make a fine soldier without all this fuss; but his superiors know perfectly well that, unless he learns to respond instantly to the word of command, the enemy is likely to see his back when the critical hour arrives.

You have to take these early lessons in discipline on trust, very much as a soldier takes his drill, because you know no more of the dangers of life than a recruit does of real battle.

Those who do know, and have faced temptations, and have seen others falling on all sides for want of training, have framed them for your benefit. They are the outcome of the experience of generations, nor can you gain the kind of wisdom that is needed to reshape these rules, except by living, so that it is altogether too soon for you to set up as critics and reformers.

Your first business is to struggle for the mastery over yourself, and to learn to obey promptly, and to believe that in so doing you are preparing yourself to face ordeals that are mercifully hidden from the spring time of your life.

Let us suppose that you have gained a certain mastery in such things as form the routine of school life. This is something not to be despised, but it is only a small part of the kind of control which as a girl you should be aiming at.

You have a strong emotional life within you, and if it is not to be your servant, it will be a most convenient ally of the devil, who, by its aid, will fool you and trick you at every turn.

Can you control either laughter or tears when you wish to?

You may ask, why, if tears and laughter are the natural language of grief and joy, common to both men and women, should we be continually trying to control them, or be ashamed to own that we laugh or cry our eyes out whenever it suits us?

Just because they are a language that should express the real self, and are powers intimately connected with the life of the body, they must come under the rule of the spirit.

No person is in the least expressing her real feelings or her truest self when she bursts into tears every time she is moved to pity or anger, or her vanity or self-love is hurt. No one is a bit nearer understanding the real extent or cause of her grief, but all can see that her nerves are out of order, and that she has lost control over them. The

point at which the pressure of emotion is so great, that tears are formed and must be shed, is sooner reached in a woman than in a man. Being physically weaker she often needs help from a man, and tears of this kind, tears that come because the limits of a real self-control are passed, are a natural appeal for such help, or may be a natural relief for grief, for which no human help is possible.

But tears cease to be a language and become a tyranny and a nuisance to all around, when they come at the call of every trivial emotion or uneasiness. And how bitterly we may come to regret a slavery that may seem a small matter in the beginning.

Some day, when you are moved deeply, you would give all you have to help others in trouble or pain, to be of use to them, but you cannot steady your own voice or master your agitation, the tears come, you increase the distress of the sufferer and are a hindrance where you would be a help.

Self-control is not gained in a moment. Many a one, who at first could hardly steady her knees to carry her down the ward of a hospital, has become a reliable nurse in the operating-room. All the more valuable by reason of the nerve sensitiveness that made control hard to gain.

It is exactly because a woman is naturally quick of perception and tender of heart, that

it is her paramount duty to govern her nerves, for that is what it comes to, if she is to be of any use in the world. The share of the world's work that will be eternally hers, however customs change and fashions come and go, will be the care of the young, the weak, the sick, the aged and the afflicted, all tasks that need long patience and genuine love, but also the power of enduring long nervous strain. Woman, we are constantly told, is weaker than man, but if in her own province she is not the stronger, she has failed miserably in her womanhood. What is required of us in the way of self-mastery is, that we shall be ready when duty calls, with eye and hand well under control, ourselves forgotten, our minds filled with the needs of another.

But this power of repression, if gained, is only one side of self-control; there is another, too often overlooked, but so entirely necessary to our own and other people's happiness, that it needs careful consideration. The first side of self-mastery is a repressing of wrong inclinations, or a checking of an ill-timed or exaggerated expression of right ones; but we have besides to learn a language of *expression*.

We have a personality, the gift of God, and we must honestly and reverently see that this individuality of ours is so liberated that others can recognize and appreciate it as God intended.

Can we *show* sympathy, or when we earnestly desire to say a kind thing, are we possessed by a dumb devil of shyness?

Here is surely a want of self-mastery. The kind thought is there, also the wish to utter it in some intelligible way, but we do not possess the key to set the works moving somehow, or it has grown rusty, or we have never tried to turn it.

This burying of faculties that should be in daily use is the cause of much misery in after life, of misunderstanding, of isolations, or lost opportunities untold. Seeing how strong is the life of the affections in a woman, and how uncertain her chance of meeting with an occasion, or an individual, that shall require all she has to give, or who can give all that she feels to need, and seeing what a source of danger are unused and pent-up powers, is it not common prudence to dig many channels along which the affections can continually flow, irrigating the dry places of the world as they go? This second kind of self-control is in reality the digging of such channels. When a little child runs and throws its arms round the neck of some one it loves, and hugs her so boisterously as almost to upset her, we feel that this outburst is rather attractive, that it shows there is good stuff behind, but that the child will have to learn another way of showing love before it grows up. And yet it would be rather sad, if, when the child had

become a man, he had become so controlled, in the one-sided sense of the term, as to have no power of showing what was in his heart. Or—and this is so very English—could only at some great crisis in life show in some crude volcanic way what subterranean fires have been smouldering.

A woman, more frequently than a man, experiences the need to express ordinary sympathy and kindness, and to communicate some felt happiness or merriment—needs, in a word, to be true to her nature.

Women who have not acquired a language of expression, accurate in that it has triumphed over shyness and stopped short of exaggeration, do themselves scant justice.

It is as much a duty to force out a kind word and to show the right and honest affection, as it is to check the unkind word and repress the wrong feeling.

Reason must decide if the feeling be right or wrong, and if right, out it must come and show itself. Its first appearance may be clumsy enough, but it will acquire fresh grace and ease of deportment every time it makes its bow. This will be easy, or difficult, according to the natural character, surroundings, and opportunities of the individual. The less gifted and less fortunate women will be those to suffer most in after life from a neglect of this art. The more they are dumb, the more likely are they to be lonely.



One often sees some poor, shy creature on the point of trying to say something that she really feels, a small speech of gratitude, for instance; she grows so nervous and uncomfortable that the trouble spreads and the feeling of uneasiness becomes general. There is a growing dread of some crude manifestation of emotion, and a moment that should have been instinct with graceful kindness is hurried over, and everyone is glad to be through with it.

The whole thing may be summed up as the duty to take care that the version of ourselves which we present for the inspection of others shall be expressive of the best that is in us.

This dual mastery, this power of holding back unworthy or unreal emotions, and of bringing the nobler ones into action and training, enables us to do this.

It is impossible to begin too young; the right exercising of them is a long business, long in proportion to the depth and strength of the material to work upon.

Many a polished and equable manner in middle age is a travesty of life within, which it conceals, and is in itself the result of continual effort to hide feelings and thoughts which should have been uttered. If we all possessed these powers, there would be incalculably more real friendships in the world. The world is not a big playground then, and



if it were, we that should play in it have within us the germ of a disease contracted at the fall, so that even if outer circumstances did not compel us to self-discipline, we should be compelled from within.

On the threshold of life we one and all need, irrespective of our talents, our charms, our fortunes and our position, this double power of self-control.

We cannot determine our own state of life; our lot may be the very opposite to what we should have imagined would suit us best.

The wisest course is to be prepared to face the least easy.

According to the law of natural life women are created to be wives and mothers, but there is a supernatural life which not only sanctifies the married state, but also calls individuals to the religious state and to other spheres of happiness and usefulness. These latter states are more difficult, in so far as it is harder to live in a way which involves a continual sailing against the stream of nature than in one that sails with it.

I would not dare forecast a future of virtue and happiness for any girl who has not begun to acquire some self-mastery by the time she is entrusted with a certain amount of liberty, for such a prophecy would give the lie to all that I have observed in life.

The key-note of this generation is not that of the last; you are entering upon liberties

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that your mothers never dreamed of, you have new opportunities, you have also new dangers to face, you certainly have new work to do, and you have to fit yourself for the work.

In the mind of God is foreshadowed for each one of you a beautiful and attractive character, your possible self, your certain self, if you conquer the hindrances to grace; but, in the as yet unplanted wilderness of each girl's soul of you, there should be a voice crying: "Prepare ye the ways of the Lord; make straight His paths."

## II

# Liberty

### THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

Now this is the law of the Jungle—as old and as true  
as the sky;  
And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the  
wolf that shall break it shall die.  
As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law run-  
neth forward and back—  
For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength  
of the wolf is the pack.

KIPLING.

You are going to gain freedom? Well, that depends mainly on yourself. You are soon to be free of school rules. We will assume that you are reasonable (that is assuming a great deal!), that you are free, in that your spirit is in no way the slave of your body, and that you know the value of freedom well enough to be anxious not to break a moral law and become a slave; but there is another law, curious, intricate, puzzling, the social law of the great world you are entering, very literally "A law of the Jungle."

If the world were entirely Christian, there would be one law, but as things are, we may compare the Christians and Christian communities in the world to cultivated oases in a

great jungle of tangled vegetation and untamed life, in which one creature wars and struggles with another. Only very imperfectly have the laws, which may be discerned as in some way regulating this tangle and disorder, yielded, as yet, to Christian influence.

Your position with regard to this law is different from that of girls brought up more in the world than you have been.

They have learned it gradually, unconsciously, and have developed a whole set of protective instincts and perceptions that act as a kind of alarm signals, warning them of the danger of law breaking; you have to set about studying it as a preparation for enjoying liberty.

The Jungle law is the result of experience, and embodies a working compromise between conflicting beliefs and ideals; it is not always logical or just, but it is in actual operation, and to break it is to forfeit freedom.

This law is not immutable, for it is in constant process of change and evolution; but it is inexorable.

Mark the difference. While the individual conscience has from the beginning of time been in exactly the same relation to Almighty God that it is to-day, and right and wrong stand opposed to each other as they have ever done, mankind as a whole has been undergoing a civilizing process, and the civilizing has

been in the main upon Christian lines. Now had you happened to be living some centuries ago, and suddenly taken it into your head to make an excursion alone and unattended into either town or country, you would certainly have met with some kind of violence or terrifying experience, and in no sense of the word would you have been free, for you would have been at the mercy of rough people of half-tamed passions and instincts, and—here is the point—you would have broken the law of the Jungle as they understood it, and by this act you would have given them, in their opinion, a perfect right to show their teeth and claws.

By acting in the same way to-day you would incur none of these risks, for you would be breaking no Jungle laws as now recognized, people generally having come to see that the physically weak have equal rights with the strong; but the tooth and the claw are there all the same, and the Jungle law is there; it has only retreated more into the background, and when it comes into operation it is as relentless as ever. It should be your business to find out how it works to-day. For instance, every town has its unwritten laws: there are everywhere streets or districts which it is not prudent to visit alone or at certain hours. Sometimes there is even a danger to safety; and, at all times, to infringe one of these unwritten laws is to lay

yourself open to be mistaken for someone who has forfeited respect.

You might be walking down the streets of a town, filled with orderly, well-mannered people, and wondering how it ever came to be supposed that girls could not take care of themselves anywhere and everywhere, and reflecting if there are wicked people they keep well out of sight; and then you might turn down another street, one where the Jungle law decrees ladies do not walk except at the call of necessity or duty, and a whole underworld seems to have come to the surface: you might find yourself annoyed, insulted, frightened, and treated with disrespect, although you were behaving exactly as you had done in the other street.

Here are the tooth and claw showing again, as ready as ever in the old days to do harm to any who have strayed into their haunts. In neither case would your act in ignoring the law have been that of a reformer, but the outcome of an ignorance of the state of society in which you lived, or such a piece of idiotic foolhardiness as often accompanies feeble intelligence.

You may wonder how the law ever comes to change, if to act in defiance of it has such fatal consequences.

No improvement is ever effected by those who have merely failed to recognize it. Understand that the Jungle law is not in itself



cruel, but protective, and may be likened to a wall set up between the land in which virtuous and secure lives may be lived and the unclaimed land inhabited by those who prey upon the weak in acts of cruelty and violence.

Now it happens in the course of time that tracts of land on the wild side of the wall fall under cultivation, are reclaimed in fact by those who have tilled the ground on the boundary line, and may safely be visited; their original inhabitants have fallen back to wilder places.

The wall remains standing until some people taller and more thoughtful than the rest look over and say, "this land is ready for us, there is no longer need of this wall, which must be pulled down now and moved further back, where it will again be useful as a rampart."

There is always an outcry from those who cannot see over, and do not believe the new land is desirable, and are naturally timid of the risk, but no sooner is the wall down than all but a few enter into the new possession gladly.

Here is a practical illustration. Some years ago it was not considered correct for girls to attend even dances in private houses unless each had her chaperon. The custom survived from a time when behavior was less decorous, and girls very simple and easily led, and men less trustworthy.



When under new influences girls became more dignified and self-respecting, and manners generally more refined, chaperons began to see that they were hardly needed in such numbers, until now at small dances the hostess herself is often considered all-sufficient.

Observe, this change has not come about because ideas regarding the behavior at balls are less strict than they were, but because girls have by their behavior shown themselves deserving that more confidence should be placed in them. Should any girl enter a social circle where these ideas prevail, under the impression that this liberty entitled her to behave in as fast and ill-bred a way as she pleased, she would soon learn a lesson—she would be quietly cold-shouldered out, until she had to drop into a set less refined and less desirable.

Those on the right side of the jungle wall feel that they have to protect themselves, and if someone comes among them bringing in the manners of those on the wrong side, they instantly recognize the school in which the manners have been acquired, and shut the door upon her as soon as may be.

You cannot understand the principle underlying these laws too thoroughly, for there is a distinct danger that when you leave school and hear much talk of liberty and the new ideas, as you certainly will, you may

jump to the conclusion that you can safely do anything, provided that you yourself can see no moral harm in it.

It is perfectly true that you must promptly obey every warning of danger that your conscience gives you—but the converse is not true; it is not safe to embark on any course of conduct in the world against which your conscience does not warn you, for conscience cannot make you aware of dangers of which your intelligence and reason are ignorant. You may feel impatient and a little indignant that so many people, even strangers, should busy themselves about your behavior, and the phrase, "I can quite well take care of myself," may rise to your lips, and you may think, "why do people imagine that because I am a girl I am not to be trusted?" This solicitude does not spring from a poor opinion of the character of girls, and it is not merely a matter of trusting.

In the eyes of Almighty God a boy and a girl are of equal value. If a boy sins, his guilt is equal to that of a girl; the punishment is the same, each has the same certainty of forgiveness, the ways of seeking and obtaining the forgiveness are identical.

The consequences of breaking the Jungle law are different; the weight of its punishment falls unevenly, falls immeasurably more heavily upon the weaker.

There are sins a woman may fall into, the

committing of which, in so far as she may have been untaught, unhelped, and the victim of a bad upbringing, may not have involved great guilt in the eyes of Almighty God, but may have involved the breaking of one of the Jungle laws, whose punishment lasts the length of life.

It is because it is possible for a girl, through ignorance, to run the risk of incurring an injury from which there is no complete redress in this life, that all men and women with any goodness and chivalry in them constitute themselves her friends, and so many knights errant in her behalf. They have lived long enough to have seen the Jungle law, when broken, dealing out its uneven retribution, and they feel the pity of it.

We are each of us to a certain extent the creatures of environment.

An animal is strongest in those qualities which his surroundings have made necessities of his existence, such as swiftness, or cunning, or daring.

For the same reason human beings are likely to be dependent or independent, thoughtful and reasonable, or careless or impulsive, according as the circumstances of their lives have called the one or the other qualities into play.

A new environment will develop new qualities in due course, but the dangerous time is

that immediately following the change. It would be possible to emerge from school well equipped with the double self-control we considered in the last chapter, and yet to make serious mistakes unless awake to the need of a guide.

How then can you best learn what you are free to do, what not?

All are not placed in the same circumstances; some of you have homes and careful parents always at hand to advise, others of you will have to go among strangers, and others again will be obliged to enter some profession and earn a living.

In whatsoever surroundings you find yourselves there will always be someone whom you will observe to be generally respected. In school life certain girls exercised a good influence and had a healthy tone about them, and, whatever social circle you may enter, you will observe that these girls have their counterparts. It is with such you would do wisely to take counsel.

No one changes a state of life without having much to learn and being obliged to seek the shelter of someone's wing at first. It matters a great deal whose wing. Many good people deserving all respect do not keep up with the times in their ideas of the permissible, and imagine a Jungle wall to be still standing long after it has been removed. It would be a mistake to consult one of these.

On whatever other subjects one may profitably seek counsel of one's grandmother, it would be foolish to consult her upon the current etiquette of the day if she had retired from society for many years.

Choose someone of your world, of your social set, of your new profession, not the one most likely to fall in with your own inclinations, but the one most deserving of esteem, and you will avoid the risk of making a false start and being gravely misjudged.

The dwellers in the Jungle make no allowances for ignorance; they assume you must know what they all know, and should they see you in the wrong place and the wrong set they would conclude that you had a natural affinity to both.

I think it will be helpful to take a brief survey of the social changes that have been going on in the non-Catholic world during the last half century, especially with regard to women, and to endeavor to understand what forces have been at work to bring about the present state of society.

You will come across much that will astonish and shock you, much that will strike you as brilliant and dazzling, and not a little that will command your respect. You will hear above all a great deal of extravagant talk of liberty, of the right to live your own life, and of independence, and if you are observant you will discover that these ideas are

often confused, contradictory, and have no stability of belief underlying them.

What is known as the "woman's movement" began in the middle of the last century, and was a reaction from the state of oppression that could never have taken exactly the form it did had the country kept the faith.

To whatever extent Catholic women may have suffered from lack of education from time to time, they have always enjoyed a liberty that exists nowhere outside of the Church, liberty in the spiritual life.

The Church has ever recognized their freedom to choose the religious life, and the possibility of their ascending to heights of sanctity and knowledge.

Devotion to our Lady fostered the belief in the dignity of womanhood, and the sacramental nature of marriage raised the position of women very high in the home. Outside the Church things were different. Fragmentary forms of Christianity survived in the separated churches.

Faith in the Incarnation was tampered with, devotion to our Lady ceased, marriage was no longer recognized as a sacrament, and ideas concerning women inevitably deteriorated.

Since the suppression of the monasteries, until the last century, no effort was made to educate them.



Their position in married life was one of distinct inferiority. The unmarried led narrow, starved, and dependent lives, and it is no exaggeration to say that they were looked upon with a certain amount of contempt, and that it was the fashion to make, at their expense, jests in the worst possible taste.

Failings, that were the inevitable outcome of their surroundings and narrowed horizons, were regarded as inherent in feminine nature, for mankind lacked, and outside the Church still lacks, a fixed ideal for womanhood.

A feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction with the existing state of things grew, until it resulted in a great educational movement which swept over the face of the nation, and in a surprisingly short space of time the doors of many professions and useful careers were opened to women. The ideas of parents with regard to the education and future careers of their daughters underwent a great change. The movement was, in the main, in the right direction, and the zeal and seriousness with which girls set about availing themselves of the new opportunities were beyond all praise.

Much of the knowledge and influence they now gained was used in the interests of poor and less fortunate women, and more than one Act of Parliament owes its origin to the energy and devotion of women.



It is not surprising that in a movement so universal, eccentricities and extravagances should have occurred, and that in its early stages individuals rushed to extremes and sacrificed many of the graces of womanhood. Nor is it surprising that a good deal of regrettable and unwholesome fiction has come from the pen of women. Through the talent and artistic power of much modern literature, the absence of any bed-rock of belief or standard of right and wrong is only too apparent.

The courage which women had acquired in availing themselves of the new advantages, and the intellectual power attained, when not restrained by faith or illuminated by revelation, developed in many instances into license of thought and a reckless, irresponsible handling in fiction of the very foundations of morality.

You Catholic girls are able to enter these new liberties at an immense advantage. You are in the position of travelers with a compass, who need not be asking the way from every chance passer-by. You should be able to direct those whom you meet upon the journey. Do not allow yourselves to be dazzled by the brilliance and intellectual power you may meet with. You have the true foundation, and if you will exert yourselves you can have the intellectual power, too, and then you will become helpers of many who are poor in

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the things in which you are rich. You need then, as you stand on the threshold of life, self-control, which we considered in the last chapter, and an intelligent understanding of the new environment you are to enter, before you can hope for any measure of real liberty. Indeed, this is no world in which to be idle and frivolous!

### III

## Responsibility

The heaven of heaven is the Lord's; but the earth He has given to the children of men.—PSALM cxiii. 16.

WE may define a responsibility as a task to be done or a standard to be attained, which we cannot leave undone or unattained without harm to ourselves or others. For example, health is a responsibility, which we cannot neglect without injury to ourselves, and indirectly through ourselves to other people. If carefully thought over, we shall see that there is a responsibility connected with every gift and opportunity that we have, and that the desire to be rid of part of the toil and effort connected with our obligations is as old as the Fall, and was first voiced in that guilty cry of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" All down the ages, in one form or another, that questioning cry has been sent up in excuse for neglect or wrong done, and Almighty God has answered it plainly enough across the pages of history. Ever since the Fall there has been no choice for man, if he wish to win any blessing for himself or others, but to toil and put forth effort.

Not to bewilder ourselves between our

own obligations and those of others, let us consider what are the chief responsibilities laid upon Catholic girls who are to live in the world. Naturally these unfold themselves gradually to the individual and present themselves in small and simple things at *first*. It is necessary, however, to have a broad notion as to what are the especial needs of our times, that we may the more readily recognize our own responsibilities when we meet them.

What we do, and what we may be capable of doing some day, depends entirely on what we *are*, and happily there is enough scope in the small responsibilities laid upon us at home, in the management of our clothes, of our money and of our relationships with the rest of the household, to test what we are, and to what extent we are capable of undertaking larger duties.

But there is one paramount duty for each Catholic girl upon leaving school, and that is to use every opportunity in her way of developing herself and of continuing her education, in order to reach the very high level of intelligence which is the average intelligence of the present day.

It is not possible to remain stationary at any given mental level, and if we content ourselves with doing only what we can do easily, and are satisfied with the knowledge we already possess, we shall find what was once easy gradually becoming difficult, and our

small stock of knowledge steadily dwindling, until we arrive at a much lower level than that from which we started. There is no choice between effort and deterioration. It is not a question of abstract intellectual studies merely, though these are as good an exercise for the mind as gymnastics are for the body. Nowadays women are expected to bring a trained intelligence to everything they lay their hands to. Every woman in her capacity of homemaker must have some sound knowledge of the laws of sanitation and hygiene, and must be capable of organization and of training others. The days of indulgence towards amateurism, and inefficiency in women on the score of their sex, are irrevocably gone. There are naturally branches in every art and craft more suited to women's special gifts than others, but there is but one common standard of excellence.

In making efforts to develop yourself you will be rendering a real service to the cause of religion; and in neglecting to make them, you will be, to the extent of your power, damaging the prestige of the Catholic body in England. And if it should occur to you to share the mistaken piety of the person who asked, "What need has God of human learning?" think of the wise answer, "He has still less need of human ignorance."

When I speak of continuing your education, I am using the word in its deepest sense.

An educated person has his faculties trained and disciplined; he has an accurate knowledge of his own place and significance in the order of things, and he judges of persons and events from an information that extends far beyond the bounds of his own personal experience. An uneducated person is the reverse of all this. Should you meet someone who appears to act from motives less personal and impulsive than yours, whose sense of honor is more delicate, who is more courteous and tactful to strangers, more charitable to those who differ from him, then you have met a more highly educated person than yourself.

And I think I can put my finger on a spot where convent-bred girls are apt to be uneducated; I should like to say *were* apt to be, but although the phenomenon is rarer, it is still far too frequent. They have, during their school-days, allowed those treacherous emotions and affections to usurp a place entirely outside their province; they have allowed them to determine their conduct and actions. They worked well, or did right, because they were fond of the nun who taught them, and thought little or nothing of the principle behind, or of the will of Almighty God. In the same way they took a dislike to another nun, and the subject she taught was neglected or ill done: their heart was not in it. All the while they were quite unaware



what primitive and instinctive creatures they were allowing themselves to become, and how, instead of aiming at a Christian standard which places woman on an equality with man as a reasonable being, they were really tending towards the Mohammedan ideal that denies her a soul. If unchecked in these tendencies, they would ultimately find their moral peers amongst a tribe of savages.

And what a difference between the atmosphere of a class, where these feverish preferences, these hysterical fancies and antipathies prevail, with their accompanying jealousies and lassitudes, and one filled with girls keenly interested in the subject taught, taking a healthy pleasure in work, and full of the happiness that comes from the right use of faculties.

What is the result of this enervating misuse of affections? A girl leaves school and lives near a poor mission, where work which the laity can do cries to be done; her help is needful in a girls' club, or sodality, or in the care of a neglected chapel, but she does not *like* the priest! All is finished! no work for our Lord to be got from her! Or, almost worse, she is not interested in a work or a cause, but she does like the priest or the nun in charge of a sodality. She is always about whether she can be of use or not, and she is not alone; twenty others experience the same attraction, and are competing with her for



favor, or notice, or a word of praise, and we have that bad atmosphere of the class-room back again. Such sights make one cover one's face with shame, that girls should have so little desire to climb to higher things, and do not see the deplorable weakness and folly of such a misuse of God-given faculties.

All growth entails pain and effort, but rest assured that if you feel there is truth in this description and that it applies to you in any degree, you are not ready for any real work in the world until you have enthroned reason in its proper place and given your affections that discipline which is the only soil in which they can grow and develop upward. It is all the more important for you to realize that this employment of the affections is a sign of want of education, because modern training has almost stamped it out of public girls' schools and banished it to the uneducated classes, fairly represented by domestic servants.

Let us face the truth, the only road to humility, and in doing so we shall at the same time do ourselves justice. The truth is that we are in many ways behind the standard of the day, but it is also true to say that our being so is inevitable.

When we look back upon history we have to admit that it is surprising that we are as far advanced in education as we are. It rests with the present generation of girls to push

that advance still further, and to show that those who belong to the Church of Christ are in every way as keen for their own and others' progress as their sisters.

Not so very long ago Catholics in England were forced to live a life quite apart; they could not, even if they had wished it, enter into public life or mix freely in society. Girls were taught by those who had been deprived of the benefits of a higher education, but who handed on faithfully the traditional arts and crafts of the convent; they returned to homes where amusements necessarily filled up much of the day. They entered a society, if they belonged to the upper classes, to which their families were intimately bound by ties of faith and relationship—a social circle composed of families sharing the same traditions of persecution and privation, and united as only those can be united who have shared a common sorrow. What wonder if their hearts were often more with those of other races, but the same faith, than with their hostile fellow-countrymen.

This isolation, which began in necessity, came to be prolonged from choice or from timidity after the need for it had ceased; Catholics continued to hold the fort after the enemy had done besieging. Many came to forget that the Church is above all a missionary church with a message to the whole world, and happy in the affections, the inter-

ests, and the memories of the old circle, counted it more cause for congratulation to have kept one intruder out of their society than to have gained one soul for Christ. Old traditions were carefully preserved, and in their midst rigid and minute class distinctions were adhered to long after the broader and more democratic spirit of the age had modified them in general society.

They slept on a little after it was time to wake—a well-earned sleep, perhaps, on the part of those who had held the fort in time of need; but what could we say for a generation that should inherit a capacity for repose which they had done nothing to earn?

Meanwhile new movements were taking place in England. The spirit of God, which led so many great recruits into the Catholic Church some sixty years ago, also breathed life into a movement mysterious and puzzling in its beginnings, but whose inner meaning and ultimate utility to the Catholic cause is beginning to unfold itself—the so-called Anglo-Catholic revival within the Church of England. In no other way could prejudice and hostility to Catholicism have been melted away to the extent which has been the case among the upper classes, and people gradually, almost unconsciously, be led back to accept the greater part of Catholic teaching. In no other way could that widespread interest and curiosity about the

Church have sprung up to which so much of our modern literature and fiction bears witness.

Contemporaneously with this awakening arose a great philanthropic movement, and a generation grew up deeply stirred by the needs of the poor and the ignorant, whom modern industry had massed into our great cities, deeply convinced of the duty of spending on their behalf their gifts and their energies, and enthusiastic to proclaim: "*I am my brother's keeper.*" These two movements, the religious and the philanthropic, have to a great extent joined hands, and have resulted in a vast network of social and semi-religious activities.

The part which the laity have played in these activities, in the gift of their leisure, their personal service, their brains and their energies, I say frankly, puts the Catholic *laity* to shame.

I would especially call your attention to the amount of solid work that has been done by ordinary girls and women living in the world. And in pointing out this I am not for a moment forgetting the conspicuous sacrifices and services rendered by many notable Catholics, but the movement outside the Church has greatly owed its strength to the widespread recognition of the responsibility of sharing the social burden, and of each in his obscure corner of the earth doing his ut-

most for the welfare of those less fortunate than himself.

Almighty God might, of course, act independently of human aid, but He has chosen otherwise; "the earth He has given to the children of men," and through the work and co-operation of the children of men His kingdom is to be spread. And here I may remark that I have often heard it urged in excuse for the apathy of our laity that the immense output of non-Catholic energy is due to an inner unrest, a striving to fill a conscious void within, and a weak faith that craves to see immediate results. It is, of course, true that with the peace that comes from a closer union with God than is possible outside the Church the strain and effort to do the work would diminish, and the tone and atmosphere of the work itself would change; but are we to believe that hearts would cool and grow indifferent to the needs of others? We should indeed have misread the lives of God's saints to think this.

Because God has lavished graces upon you Catholic girls, will He not expect far more from you than from those whom He has allowed to remain in their difficulties? Are you to do less for the love of Him you possess than is done by those in the longing and hope of knowing Him? Wherever there is a chapel neglected, and showing in its shabbiness and poverty the want of loving and con-

tinual care, wherever there is a child uneducated or a cottage unvisited, there is a work for girls to do.

It is not too much to say that the intelligent co-operation of all the laity is needed, according to their gifts and capacities, if the Catholic Church is to take the place that should be hers, as the centre of vigorous life and influence in the nation.

Nor am I forgetting the great work and devotion of the women in the religious orders, but you must remember that that work is to a great extent hidden from the gaze of the outer world; it is you, the laity in the world, who have to carry the light of Faith for all to see. You are the little cities set upon the hills, and it is very largely by you, and what you are, and what you do, that Catholicism will be judged. A smouldering fire never heats anything red hot, and can you wonder if some Protestant, whose own struggles and difficulties have developed in her great energy and zeal, is not greatly stirred at the sight of a Catholic girl who has received so much without exertion of her own, and yet is content to practise the minimum of devotion permissible; and counts it no shame to have spent so much time on her dress and her amusements that she has none to give for the poor and needy? I hope to write more in detail about the practical work that can be done, and the way to set about it, also about



professional life and the problems that accompany it, in other chapters.

We will now turn our attention to two immediate responsibilities that await every girl, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, upon leaving school, responsibilities that are usually welcomed with open arms: the control of a little money and the choice of clothes. A good deal might be said on both subjects. As regards the spending of money, I will only point out that there is some danger that a convent-bred girl may forget the duty of setting a part of her money aside to be spent upon others, and upon the support of religion. There have, perhaps, been no collections in the Convent chapel; everything has been done for her, and she has not been accustomed to devote a portion of her pocket-money, however small, to some charitable purpose.

The most practical and safest plan is, after careful thought, to dedicate in your mind a certain portion of your money, however small, for this purpose, and to consider only the remainder as yours to spend as you like. Giving is a habit that needs cultivating, for selfishness and miserliness creep in unawares from very small beginnings, and even the small beginnings contract and tarnish the character.

Now comes the dress problem. I believe the responsibility laid upon every girl is to



make herself look as charming as possible, provided that in so doing she is neither *dishonest* nor *unkind*.

If the doing of this involves effort and economy or contrivance, so much the better for her. In these days all color and decorativeness in dress is left to the women and children, and we have only to remember the appearance of the streets and of social gatherings, in a time of national mourning, to realize what a depressing effect upon spirits and character would follow if women no longer contributed all the charm and grace to social life within their power. Nor should this, rightly understood, be food for vanity.

In the souls of most women is implanted a love of the beautiful, of color, of form, and to a few is given an artistic gift of expressing this in dress. An apparent indifference to appearance, when the kind of life being led does not necessitate great severity or simplicity, far from being the sign of superior intelligence, is often the result of dulness of mind and a slovenly disposition. The wearer of this slovenly dress is often full of vanity at what she believes to be her seriousness and superiority to female weaknesses. Does not this seem like an encouragement to all the showy extravagance and want of reticence to be seen in the dress of recent years?

We shall see that the condition that we are

to infringe neither honesty nor kindness imposes many restrictions.

To be honest, we must never ape the style of dressing of a social class to which we do not belong, or endeavor, by the wretched form of vulgarity that translates every available penny into clothes, irrespective of other claims, to appear to have more money than is really the case.

To be honest, we must never order what we cannot afford to pay for within a reasonable time. I believe there would be far less of this miserable dishonesty, if the women who practise it could be brought face to face with the suffering and anxiety it entails ultimately upon the workers and toilers who produce what they buy : people to whom deferred payment may mean semi-starvation, and who dare not enforce payment for fear of alienating what custom they have.

A little intelligent inquiry into the workings of various trades, and a little sympathetic imagination about the lives of others less fortunate than ourselves, will clear the matter up. This would be a good subject for meditation for any girl who is about to manage a dress allowance for the first time.

Although it is every girl's duty to try to have as pleasing an appearance as possible, it is not altogether a simple matter to succeed. Taste requires educating and refining, and bringing into line with Christian

thought. The French describe a vulgarly and unsuitably dressed person as "out of her frame." She is dressed with a view to attracting attention to herself, to deceiving the spectator as to her position, or to mortifying and discomfiting less richly dressed acquaintances—all coarse and egotistical motives, which cause her to violate the real laws of beauty.

The ideal of beautiful dressing is that it should be appropriate to the age and position of the wearer, and to the occasion on which it is worn. A dress suitable for driving in a carriage is vulgar when worn to walk in a muddy street; and one intended for an opera or ball would appear extravagant at a small party, and the wearer would violate the law of kindness.

The ideal for a girl should be to make herself charming while keeping strictly within the limits of her means, and to endeavor, if she has talent and taste, to show kindness by helping others who happen to be less gifted in the art to be charming also. The coarse-fibred and selfish mind, that wishes to attract notice to self and to score a vulgar success, betrays itself in an unwillingness to be helpful to others, and inevitably in an extravagant and advertising appearance.

Great temptations and real opportunities for heroism revolve around this subject of dress, for it frequently happens that girls

with very small allowances belong, by reason of their birth, to a set where the standard of dress is beyond what they can well manage, so that they have to accept cheerfully the rôle of being always the simplest or the shabbiest in the assembly.

The responsibility laid upon *Catholic* girls in this matter of dress is to see that their standard of honor and kindness is in no way behind that of the very highest principled non-Catholic, to see that they are not found to be more thoughtless and more careless as to the principles involved in extravagance and display. Also to look well to it that the time and thought given to the subject is not excessive, and does not violate the law of kindness by stealing time that should be given to others, or to cultivating their minds for the benefit of others. Those in high position cannot too constantly remember how great is the force of example, and that a want of restraint in luxurious dressing on their part may awaken a fire of ambition in the heart of some poor girl, who can satisfy her newly aroused passion only at the cost of mortal sin.

Another aspect of the dress question is that of modesty.

Now, within the lines of decency, what strikes the spectator as modest or the reverse in dress is very much a matter of custom. We very soon get so used to what we con-

tinually see that it produces very little impression upon us, one way or another; and we may be shocked at a fashion in a foreign people which to them appears decorous from long use, while our most correct attire may give them an unfavorable opinion of our habits.

But there is such a thing as a Christian standard of modesty which is common to all professing Christians, whatever their nationality. I should define this modesty as the avoidance of the unnecessary display of merely natural and physical beauty. Whatever the natural beauty of the head and face, it is also the seat and mirror of intellectual beauty, in a direct way that can be claimed for no other part of the body.

No face is evil and degraded by reason of the *presence* of physical beauty, but by reason of the *absence* of spiritual and moral beauty. The head and face therefore are always intended to be, for human beings, the centre of interest and attraction, and between the refined *décolletage* that bears this object well in view, and the unrefined display which aims merely at attracting admiration to the beauty of any other physical charm, there is all the difference between a Christian and a pagan motive.

These matters are regulated for most girls by the custom of the society in which they move; but, unless care be taken, there is room

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for the pagan motive to slip in under cover of any fashion.

Here is a final responsibility to which every girl should give heed. Whether she will or no, she is helping to raise or lower the thoughts concerning women of every man she meets. You Catholic girls should do your utmost to raise the standard of such thoughts very high, for it rests with you to mirror forth in your lives, to a world greatly needing them, some of the graces of Mary Immaculate.

## IV

### Professional Life

Now it is only by labor that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labor can be made happy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity.

—RUSKIN.

A PROFESSIONAL, as popularly understood, is one who pursues some kind of calling as a means of livelihood which, while it requires natural aptitudes, also necessitates a more or less elaborate previous training. Similarly, an amateur is a person who, while working upon a subject for the love of it and by the light of his natural gifts, disdains to acquire the thorough training that would give his labors commercial value in the open market. The amateur flourished in days when a social stigma rested upon the earning of money, and when the acquiring of a training usually involved temporary isolation from his social class. He is an all but extinct species to-day, and upon the funeral pyre of his tribe perished vanities, futilities, and complacencies untold.

Women have now entered the world of competitive skill. In some professions they compete side by side with men; in others, as



for instance the stage, nursing, and the teaching of girls, they compete with their own sex. These latter occupations have been followed by women from comparatively early times, but it is only of late years that they have been promoted to the rank of professions; and this has come about because women of gentle birth, good education, and trained for their work, have entered these fields of labor.

The new order of society has been sufficiently long in operation to make it possible for us to begin to see what the effects of professional life are upon feminine nature in general. There are risks and compensations, and we must endeavor to see how far supernatural grace obviates the risks and preserves the womanly nature intact. When we have glanced at this deeper view of the question, we must consider the outlook for girls in the various professions from a practical point of view.

Roughly speaking, two classes of women enter professions.

One class consists of those who are compelled by force of circumstances to earn a livelihood, and who may have no inclination for the independence and personal effort which the life involves, and possibly no marked abilities. In past times such women usually became private governesses under very unsatisfactory conditions, or, metaphor-

ically speaking, clung round the neck of the nearest male relative, who, if not disposed, was more or less forced by public opinion to support them. Their idleness was harmful to themselves and a burden for others; and ideas have so far changed that nowadays relatives prefer to spend what little money is available upon providing the girl with a training to enable her to support herself, rather than to invest it to enable her to live a life of genteel penury.

The other class consists of women who have gifts so decided and personalities so marked that they are compelled from within to seek an outlet for their powers. What became of them under the old conditions? They too often furnished society with eccentric characters, and were known, somewhat misleadingly, as "strong-minded women." Thwarted powers find strange outlets, and many an old lady has attempted to express her contempt for the conventional dulness of her neighbors by defying the fashions and inventing her own code of manners. When women of this latter class have also been among those whom poverty compelled to work, they endeavored to pick up the crumbs of a training in a Bohemian world where women were little respected, and where no provision was made for their legitimate advent.

Are we to believe that *any* women enter

professions as wholeheartedly and with the same stability of purpose as do men?

You will remember that I laid it down in the first chapter that every woman of whatever type owns in her heart, sooner or later, to the conviction that marriage would be the most complete life for her. If this is so, how far does it modify her attitude towards professional life?

To different types of women love and marriage are foreshadowed very differently, and it is necessary to realize this in order to understand how their outlook on a life of work is colored by these diverse views.

The women who enter professions by force rather than choice, those who are not naturally attracted by independence and work, have pre-eminently a love of home, of affection, and of shelter. They find their happiness in the nursery, their recreation in society and support in a certain atmosphere of conventionality. They are primarily in love with the married state as such, and are disposed to look gratefully upon any individual man who is kind and agreeable and whose affection will enable them to enter it; nor are they exacting as to the character of the individual, provided that he falls reasonably into line with the men of their social world.

The supernatural woman of this type bears a higher impress. She is deeply impressed with the sanctity of the married state, she

dreams of the privilege of training immortal souls for God and regarding her husband as joint partner in this responsibility; she has with him, in whatever other ways they may lack community of interest, this deep bond of union. Giving first the best and strongest love of her heart to Almighty God, there is an atmosphere of dignity about her that can never be attained by the woman who, knowing no God, clings with hopeless dependencies and impossible exactions upon the love of a creature. It is easy to see that professional life is regarded by such women as these as a kind of exile, or at best a tolerable place of waiting until their dream of married happiness is fulfilled, although it would be unfair to assume that this attitude of mind prevents their giving thorough and conscientious attention to the work of the present.

Love and marriage are shadowed forth in the minds of the women of strong individuality differently; they dream only of marriage as the natural sequel to an overmastering attachment. They demand in the man who inspires this attachment a kindred spirit, intellectual sympathy and harmony of character. They do not enter the married state unless led captive by the conqueror. Conquest implies previous resistance, and it is a fact that all the intellectual and artistic powers, in the exercise of which a woman has hitherto found happiness, put themselves in

battle array and make a fight for liberty when the conqueror appears, whose ultimate victory they foresee will greatly curtail their liberty. This conflict of powers is a wholesome test of the genuineness of the passion felt. Strong personalities have the gift of inspiring strong attachments, and if it is women of this type whose careers have blotted with crime and stained with tragedy the annals of history, it is also such women who, when sanctified, have become glorious saints, have founded religious orders, and have led lives of heroic devotion in the service of God. When their vocation has been marriage they have made notable mothers, and it is such who have usually borne sons who have left their mark upon the world's history.

Clearly then we may expect the best professional work from women of this type. It is *only* from them that we can hope for anything approaching really creative work. They throw themselves into their studies all the more zealously because they realize that the time may be short, and that "love the conqueror" may lurk round any corner, and this thought is a kind of dear dread in their hearts, and while secretly longing for the completion of their womanly nature through love, they also pray for some delay in his coming.

Let us now consider the action of the

bread-winning life upon the character of the naturally home-loving woman. For a few years, at any rate, I believe it to be almost wholly beneficial, and this even if we regard her as a merely natural being. We have seen that she has graces and what we understand as womanly qualities, but many failings accompany these qualities. Such a woman is apt to be weak, unreasonable, unimaginative and narrow-minded, incapable of broad views or the judging of things from an impersonal point of view. I may also add that she is often ignorant of justice and honor as understood in the world beyond the home, which makes her a bad citizen. These failings make an unwise mother and a trying wife.

It used sometimes to be urged that woman resembled the ivy, and man the oak around which it clung. If the simile were ever true, we have to thank a mistaken education; and, mark, the ivy eventually destroys the oak, and when there is no oak, lies helplessly upon the ground or clings to the first chance support. There is doubtless a tendency in some women's nature, once greatly fostered by popular sentiment, which, if unchecked, produces qualities that suggested the simile of the ivy. These qualities were never Christian.

The "roughing it" which a life of independence and effort entails has a very bracing effect upon such downward tendencies; the



mixing with many characters and types of mind enlarges the mental horizon; the necessity for accuracy and honor in business relations deepens the sense of responsibility. After a year or two of such experience a woman is better fitted for marriage, should it come, than before. She is more educated, and the result of all right education is to develop a lovelier type of womanhood.

After many years of professional life, however, if marriage does not come, and if she is a woman without faith and unsupported by religion, a deterioration sets in, and she compares unfavorably with her counterpart in the married state. Her affections have nothing, or at any rate nothing wholesome, to feed upon; the life is not in itself congenial, she has no personal ambition in her work, no joy in the use of faculties for their own sake; a profound discontent sets in, her character hardens, and she becomes selfish and unattractive, and too often hysterical. In the world we find so many young people contented in their work, so many joyless in middle age, so many who seem to have forgotten how to be happy.

But if she have faith this will not happen. Her heart has known no period of starvation, but has been steadily nourished and enlarged. She is humble and she loves, and is therefore content with whatever is given her to do and to bear. Loneliness to her is not the utter



loneliness that it is to the worldly. She is at peace, and is therefore a centre of peace to those around. There is an atmosphere of motherliness, that most profoundly feminine quality of all, that emanates from her. She has the power of making any place she is in feel like home. You must all have met these qualities in nuns whom you have known. The woman in professional life, whose heart loves where the nun's heart loves, possesses them, too, and brings them into the school-room, the studio, the hospital, or wherever her work lies.

And this type of woman is a most valuable influence in the rough world of work, and her character has that subtle beauty of bloom which flowers only in a soil of Christian renunciation, in a life lived by grace in a state which is contrary to natural inclination.

To the other type of woman freedom from restraint and congenial work are exhilarating. There is not the same danger here of discontent and repining when the conviction dawns that life is likely to offer little else than work, but there are other possibilities of disaster. If the restraining and refining influence of religion be absent she is likely to become entirely self-reliant, and she is then exposed to a danger to which a man is not. At her present stage of evolution, at any rate, when a woman cuts the traces and launches out into any realm of thought, she is reckless

to an extent unknown to the masculine intellect. Unable, or untrained to take the same broad and balanced view, and less in contact with the accumulative wisdom of experience pervading the masculine world, she rushes heedlessly on in pursuit of some unknown goal. This is probably caused by the same quality in her nature that prompts her to give herself unreservedly and without counting the cost to a person or a cause, and that makes her so almost hopeless to reclaim when she has given herself over to any vice.

When once a woman has tasted personal freedom, and has also gone intellectually astray, there is little to hold her back from errors in the conduct of life. Her moral courage and recklessness of self quickly bridge the gulf between thought and action. When she has reached this point, should her nature cry out for more affection than her surroundings offer, there is little to restrain her from satisfying this hunger in unlawful ways.

This I believe to be the dark cloud on the horizon of the future; woman emancipated, independent, and intellectually astray. It is not so large a cloud after all, for the majority of women-workers profess some religious belief, and there is an encouraging spirit of inquiry manifested by those who have found their self-evolved philosophies fail when put to the test.

The Catholic woman carries an ideal of womanhood in her heart, and the softening and refining influence of her faith will preserve a perpetual springtide in her affections.

I shall not have written in vain if I can persuade you that whatever other independence a woman can gain, she can never be independent of affection. This being so, it is common prudence, if it were not also the highest duty, to preserve the heart firmly in the love of God, and also to make the utmost use of all the natural ties and affections that fall to your share. They may be all that life will offer you, but if this should be so, rest assured that, rightly used, they are sufficient. In this respect you can never be as men, though man's capacity to live an isolated life without deterioration is apt to be over-estimated.

Let us now look at the various openings that are possible for a Catholic girl. There are many occupations, and every year adds to their number, into the pursuit of which the religious difficulty does not enter.

Experience has pointed to some experiments as failures and has confirmed the wisdom of others; but even when the physical and psychological effects of a calling upon feminine nature have been proved to be satisfactory, it must be remembered that there is still the law of supply and demand to reckon with, and that natural aptitudes and thor-

ough training in any given direction are useless unless there is a demand for the capacities you offer.

The choice of a career must to some extent be determined by whether you have money to spend upon a training or whether you have not, and also whether you will in course of time inherit money or be dependent upon your exertions to the end of your days. Careers such as that of medicine, the higher branches of teaching or the fine arts, are closed doors unless you have money to spend upon a training, which in these cases is both long and expensive.

At one time teaching was considered the most feasible way for a woman to earn a living; but let us look at the prospects for a Catholic girl. They are exceedingly poor. For secondary teaching there is practically no opening at all, this branch being exclusively in the hands of the religious orders. The very most that might offer, should a girl have especial qualifications, would be, now and again, posts of uncertain tenure in a convent school, to fill a gap while a nun was training to take her place. And these posts, when worth having, would probably fall to the lot of convert women who had previously obtained university degrees and were able to introduce the newest educational methods.

It is obviously not worth while training for posts which do not exist.

What is the outlook for private governesses?

Whenever ideals of education have been low, their lot has been wretched indeed. It is hard to adjust the blame. On the one hand, all kinds of incompetence and inefficiency have offered themselves at salaries hardly higher than that received by the cook; and on the other hand, parents have thought so lightly of what is of such vital importance to their children's welfare, that they have not demanded thorough qualifications, and have not been willing to make sacrifices in order to pay good salaries. They have actually preferred that the governess should be of inferior social rank, as the more easily effaced in the house, and relegated to that social limbo inhabited by one between the lady's maid and the guest.

Penniless girls who have entered situations of this kind, with poor qualifications and miserable pay, leave them in middle age poorer than they entered. There has never been margin enough from the salary to save, their youth is gone, very possibly their health, and they are often practically friendless, for their limbo had no other tenant, and permanent friends are made only among social equals. If they have relatives and if they have been filling posts in families much above them in social position, they are too often alienated from them; for the superficial

“gentility” the governess thus acquires is too often a source of mutual friction. It is nobody’s business to follow the after career of the ex-governess, when once she has left the family she has served to the best of her powers; and although many kind-hearted people do continue to take an interest in her, it requires a combination of kind hearts and wealth to make it possible to help her in old age or sickness. Thus often the private governess drifts down to die in the workhouse, or lingers out the end of her days in some charitable home of rest amongst kindred human wreckage.

This is the last opening which a penniless girl should contemplate, unless she be possessed of so great a gift for teaching and can offer such qualifications as to command a salary of £100 a year or over. The salary must allow of sufficient margin to render it possible to pay regularly into a pension fund, or upon retirement to buy an annuity. Few openings, it is true, offer so much as £100 a year at the start, but it must be remembered that the drawbacks in this case are great. Marriage is the remotest possibility, the isolation is great, the teaching life is comparatively short, and what are brilliant qualifications at the start may be old-fashioned in ten years, and thus the salary will have to decrease instead of increasing. A few such well-paid posts would offer themselves, both



at home and upon the Continent and also in India, but it is to be feared that at present these posts are not proportionately numerous among Catholics, who have not as yet come to consider the education of daughters in a serious light; and it is difficult at present to see how a Catholic girl could acquire the training that would entitle her to claim such a salary; if she had no money to spend upon training, it is certain that she could not.

A non-Catholic commanding a salary of £100 to £150 as a private governess would be expected to have taken an Honor School at a University, and to hold in addition a teaching certificate.

It is not easy to see what would be the counterpart of these qualifications for the Catholic girl, or what would represent anything like the same previous study, unless it were, over and above such certificates as were within her reach to gain, a thorough mastery of several foreign languages and perfect familiarity with the manners of the best society. In the world at large the holding of a mere certificate for teaching is accounted of very little value, and is regarded as merely a supplement to the sound general training represented by a degree, so that we may reasonably suppose that in a few years Catholics will come to take the same view, and will demand in a high-salaried private governess some very solid attainments.



With regard to the many private teaching posts offered at salaries from £50 and under, these may reasonably be held by girls who will, in the natural course of events, inherit money later on in life, and who merely desire occupation and pocket-money for the present; but they should be regarded as absolutely closed doors to those entirely dependent on their own resources.

It seems a little hard, for, when all is said and done, many girls and naturally more often the homeless ones, have a lingering preference for a post which, with all its drawbacks, offers them a share, albeit a thin and indefinite one, in a home; and if the home atmosphere is a good one this share is certainly a privilege to be desired.

The safer way of seeking it is through the door of "companionships." There is this great advantage about the post of "companion," that it is almost invariably obtained through private introduction, thus ensuring some kinship of social worlds which at once smoothes many difficulties. The chances of marriage are greater, the share in some society is certain, and the possibility of forming useful friends follows. The "companion" is not so soon superannuated as the governess, the tie is closer, and the obligation to befriend her would be considered more binding. Again, the requirements of a companion are such as could be admirably gained in

a convent school. Courteous and amiable manners, accomplishments, tact, adaptability, good temper, and capability. There are far more posts of this kind than suitable people to fill them, infirmities of temper and character being frequent disqualifications. I need not insist upon the fact that even in these posts some salary must be demanded that will allow of saving.

There remain a few posts as private secretaryships, also usually privately obtained and requiring rather higher mental powers than the "companion," together with the knowledge of a foreign language, short-hand and typewriting, as well as a reputation for tact and discretion. A good secretary soon becomes invaluable, commands a high salary and creditable social standing. There is one opening in the direction of teaching, however, that is distinctly promising even for the Catholic, namely, teaching in elementary schools. There is a movement among non-Catholics to recruit the ranks of such teachers more and more from men and women of the educated classes and of gentle birth. The gain to the taught is obvious. The field of interest for the teacher is vast, provided that her mental outlook be wide enough to grasp the significance of elementary teaching to the life of the nation.

It is the one teaching profession which at the present time is not overcrowded; the pre-

vious training is inexpensive, the hours reasonable, the holidays sufficient, and the pay good. Age is no disqualification, so that the teaching life in this department is prolonged. An assistant in London commands a salary from £80 to £115, and a head mistress one from £140 to £300. In the country the pay is rather less. Lastly, the elementary teacher is secure of a pension, and although the pensions are at present modest—from £20 to £40—there is little doubt that they will be soon raised.

The main drawback for a Catholic girl would be a social one. Catholics are not yet as democratic as their neighbors, and whereas a non-Catholic elementary teacher, well born and well educated, is sure of practical social recognition by her equals, I fear this might not as yet be the case among Catholics. But, after all, this matter, like many others, is best worked by the channel of private introduction, and in this way she could ensure, wherever she were, some intercourse with the class into which she was born.

I have considered teaching first, because that seems to me the one profession in which the outlook is quite different for a Catholic from what it is for the world at large.

We will now think of other more general openings and the advantages they offer. It is an almost impossible task for a girl still at school to inform herself accurately as to

where these openings lie; it is nearly as difficult for her relatives, should they be living in out-of-the-way places. The need of a centre of information was so widely felt that some years ago an office was opened in London for the purpose, under the title of "Central Bureau for the Employment of Women."\*

The work this bureau is doing is literally "pioneer work," and the study of the subject of women's labor is still in its infancy, but the work that has already been accomplished is great. Any girl writing to or, better still, having an interview with the experienced secretary, and stating in what direction her wishes lie, what her qualifications, or her chances of acquiring them, is certain of excellent practical advice, based on knowledge and wide experience. The secretary is in touch with the varying demands for skilled work in various parts of the country, and long experience enables her to form a very correct opinion as to the personal fitness of the applicant for the work she desires.

I shall touch only lightly and in a general way upon the advantages of various careers. Special information as to the requisite trainings and how to obtain them can be obtained at any time from the Central Bureau, when not available from some local source.

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\* "Central Bureau for the Employment of Women,"  
9 Southampton Street, Holborn, W.C.

One of the most popular careers at the present time is hospital nursing, or the many branches of nursing that demand hospital training. The profession is certainly crowded, but not overcrowded, with the competent; and the demand for nurses is likely to increase rather than diminish, as the many schemes for providing district nurses and ensuring all classes throughout the country careful nursing in sickness develop.

Good health, a clear head, quick perceptions, steady nerves and a kind heart form part of the necessary equipment for a nurse. The training is inexpensive—indeed there are still hospitals that require no premium at all—the work varied and interesting, and openings when once the training is completed are numerous and fairly well paid. It must be borne in mind, in considering a nurse's pay, that her personal expenses are very slight, whether as private nurse or hospital nurse; her board and lodging are assured, the uniform she wears is very inexpensive, and thus her pay is almost wholly to the good, and allows easily for payment into a pension fund. A movement has begun in America and has already obtained some footing in England, for training and employing ladies as nurses for children. There is little doubt that in a few years this movement will gain ground, when its immense advantages to the child and the home are generally realized.

There is at present one training ground in London—the Norland Institute. Nurses starting from there command from £36 to £70 a year, and already the Institute is organizing a pension scheme in connection with its students. The training extends over a few months, as compared with the three and four years of that for hospital nursing. This branch would naturally appeal to the more home-loving type of woman. For Catholic girls the openings would necessarily be few, and it is reasonable to suppose that non-Catholics would not often employ Catholic nurses. Here, too, we must face the same social obstacle that confronted us with regard to elementary teaching.

Let us now suppose you are an out-of-door loving girl, fond of the country, of the garden and of animals, and possessing enough general intelligence to make the study of theory no obstacle to you; then you cannot do better than turn your attention to the Women's Hostels, established for the study of the lighter branches of agriculture, such as fruit, flower and vegetable gardening, dairy work, fruit-growing, bee-keeping, poultry-farming, etc. Once trained, there are openings as teachers in country technical schools, as assistants or superintendents to private employers; or should you have enterprise and a business head, there is the possibility of opening in some part of the country



on your own account. I need not point out that as the training lasts for two or three years, this career is not open to the penniless.

Another branch of work for the out-door-loving girl is sanitary inspection. This needs a certain amount of brains, since some study of physics and chemistry, of building construction, and elementary statistical methods, is necessary. The training, however, lasts six months only and costs not more than £12. The actual work involves the inspection of tenements, workshops, factories, etc.; it is perhaps monotonous, but regular and well paid. It must be remembered, however, that not every one holding a certificate is *certain* of securing a post.

I daresay all the openings that we have been discussing may appear to you a little dreary, and secured only at the expense of much previous labor, and your thoughts may be turning in two directions that appear in a golden light, and that apparently can be entered without any preparation: literature and the stage.

Now as regards literature, if by that term you understand the writing for small magazines and periodicals, I will not deny that much success and very satisfactory incomes are often won even by comparative beginners, provided that they have a natural gift for constructing a story and can write their mother tongue correctly. I will not dogma-

tize, but I should advise that this door be tried only by those who can either afford to wait indefinitely for success, or who can produce attempts in fiction in the leisure of some regular working life. A little private influence and the interest of anyone in practical touch with this class of work is almost essential if time is not to be thrown away.

How about the stage? Given youth, personal attractions, a little intelligence, and the door swings open magically, just far enough for you to get one foot on—to walk on as a silent member of some troupe, in a dress supplied by the management, at a salary under £1 a week. But what then? There is no dramatic college in England; there is no training obtainable, other than what can be picked up as a spectator, supplemented by possibly some lessons in elocution, dancing, and fencing. Hundreds would compete with you for the chance of a part with a few words to say; hundreds would be waiting to take advantage of your first blunder. The higher you rise in the scale, the fewer the prizes, the keener the competition. It is an exceedingly arduous life, full of hardships and of bitter disappointments, and, without private influence, an almost hopeless one for all but those of very remarkable gifts. It must frankly be owned, too, that for a girl, unfamiliar with the atmosphere of the theatrical world from early association, and unprotected by rela-

tives or old friends in the profession, the life is an exceedingly dangerous one.

We now come to a career that requires a long and expensive training—that of medicine. No girl would contemplate this career who had not an exceedingly strong inclination for it, intellectual abilities and a certain amount of money to fall back upon. The prizes are not numerous, and the making of a private practice by a woman doctor is very up-hill work.

There is still a great amount of prejudice to be lived down in this country. Also it may be questioned whether women have as yet shown themselves eminently qualified for surgery or the highest branches of the profession of medicine.

What of the fine arts? A girl can hardly be said to *choose* an artistic career; she is chosen for it by her gifts and her temperament, and this because the possession of the very qualities that make for success as an artist usually unfit her for success in other work.

The training for the highest branches is long, very long—six or seven years at least. It is not actually expensive, but the six or seven years must be regarded as years of spending merely. As a means of livelihood painting is precarious even for the skilled. Thousands of pictures, the painting of which has entailed great expense, and which have

secured good places on the walls of an exhibition, remain unsold every year. Every artist knows what it is to have a little run of luck and then long periods of disappointment at some time or other in his career.

It must be admitted that the life of an art student is probably as delightful a one as can be found, and the hours spent in creative work are hours of pure enjoyment. An artist is therefore more easily reconciled to poverty than one whose interests are more bound up with the possession of worldly goods. But even the most light-hearted artist cannot live upon air; and if a girl is quite without private means she cannot hope for a career as an exhibitor merely, or even for the happiness of giving full play to her creative gifts in congenial lines, a certain amount of capital being necessary for the production of any serious picture.

Physical strength and health are so essential for the production of strong work that privations, however willingly endured, soon defeat their own end. There is luckily ample work for the competent in more modest branches—in the illustrating of books and periodicals, or in designing, and doing practical work in the many branches of the applied arts. Firms of decorators frequently employ women. There are numerous posts for teachers in connection with technical and secondary schools. Much is also to be done

by an artist with the gift of teaching in the way of opening art classes in parts of the country remote from any existing art teaching centre. No girl with a real creative gift, with initiative and with energy, need ever be at a loss to find an opening for her powers, provided—and this applies to every branch of the arts—she is *thoroughly trained*. Great natural gifts may give the untrained a start for a few years, but inevitably the trained will tread upon their heels and finally push them aside.

You Catholic girls find all these doors ready opened for you; it is for you only to choose whether you will enter or no. If you enter, do not withhold thoughts of gratitude for those who forced them open. It was the will of God in past centuries that Catholic women should be hidden in the faith, preserving the spirit of worship and prayer within convent walls and within the home. It was also His will that other women should undertake a heavy task, no less than the forging of another link in the chain of human progress. The lives of the women who labored to this end, amidst a storm of opposition, of contempt, and of slander, remain for the most part as yet unwritten.

Those of us who saw something of even the latter end of the struggle know the acute moral suffering they were called upon to endure, which you of to-day can hardly guess

at. They suffered gladly for a cause in which they had faith, and they were women of sincere and earnest purpose.

May we not dream of a time when Catholic women, entering into the heritage thus won and mingling with the intellectual children of those who fought for it, shall bring to them the priceless knowledge of the true faith? May not the blending of these two spirits make women yet more truly children of Mary, who is *Rosa Mystica*, but also *Sedes Sapientiæ*?



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